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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1897.

CONTENTS:

<i>A Statement Concerning the Marine Biological Laboratory at Wood's Holl, Mass.:</i> SAMUEL H. SCUDDER, WILLIAM G. FARLOW, ANNA P. WILLIAMS, LAURENCE MINOT, CHARLES S. MINOT, GEORGIANA W. SMITH, SIDNEY I. SMITH.....	529
<i>The Jesup Expedition to the North Pacific Ocean.....</i>	535
<i>Experimental Morphology:</i> GEORGE F. ATKINSON.....	538
<i>Physiology at the British Association:</i> FREDERIC S. LEE.....	550
<i>The Patagonian Expedition from Princeton University.....</i>	553
<i>Scientific Notes and News:—</i>	
<i>Grants from the British Association for Scientific Research; The New York Botanical Garden; General.....</i>	554
<i>University and Educational News.....</i>	561
<i>Discussion and Correspondence:—</i>	
<i>Results from the Highest Kite Flight:</i> A. LAWRENCE ROTCH. <i>The Present Evolution of Man:</i> T. D. A. COCKERELL.....	561
<i>Scientific Literature:—</i>	
<i>Thomas Elementary Solid Geometry and Mensuration:</i> C. B. WILLIAMS. <i>Miall's Thirty Years of Teaching.....</i>	563

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A STATEMENT CONCERNING THE MARINE BIOLOGICAL LABORATORY AT WOOD'S HOLL, MASS.

THE undersigned wish to state to the public, and especially to those who have contributed to the support of the Marine

Biological Laboratory, the circumstances which have resulted in their separation from the management of the institution of which they were recently trustees.

1. The Laboratory was founded by the Woman's Education Association, in cooperation with the Boston Society of Natural History at Annisquam in 1881, and in 1888 it was completely reorganized and changed into a corporation under the laws of Massachusetts. Its affairs have been managed by a board of trustees, three of whom were members of the Woman's Education Association. All the members of the original board resided in or near Boston. A few years later the board was enlarged to take in representatives of universities in various States. The original board decided upon the location, scope and organization of the laboratory, bought the land at Wood's Holl, designed and erected the first building, selected and purchased the original equipment, and appointed Dr. Whitman director to administer the laboratory. The funds for the establishment of the institution came almost exclusively from Boston. During the following years additional land was bought, and five important additions to the buildings were made, for all of which the funds were secured through the exertions of the Boston trustees, with, however, a few lesser contributions from elsewhere. In 1896 another building was erected at a cost of \$3,500, and of this

amount by far the larger part was raised outside of Boston and its connections. The total amount of money contributions is \$41,029, of which about nine-tenths was secured through the Boston members of the board of trustees. To the list of these services to the laboratory must be added the establishment and maintenance of the large dining club, without which the laboratory could not have grown to its present size.

In consideration, then, of these facts, that the plan of providing both for instruction and for investigation, and the continued life of the laboratory, have hitherto depended primarily upon the efforts of the Boston trustees, may it not be claimed that they might reasonably have expected justice and consideration from those who alone had any direct advantage from their efforts.

2. Dr. Whitman was appointed Director and has ably carried out the original plans of the trustees, and though the general plan and scope of the Laboratory have remained unchanged from the start, Dr. Whitman has suggested and carried through valuable modifications and he has devoted his summers and other time to the Laboratory for nine years, and has served through the whole period without remuneration. Under these circumstances the trustees have always striven to meet Dr. Whitman's wishes in every practical way, and have repeatedly laid aside their own preferences and convictions in order to give the Director the fullest expression of their recognition of his services. There gradually arose, however, a serious divergence of views upon important points between Dr. Whitman, upon the one hand, and the trustees, as recorded by the votes and discussions of the board, on the other.

The first point related to the general policy of the Laboratory. A large majority of all the trustees who have ever attended a meeting were convinced that the wisest

course was to plan at once a permanent building, with first-class equipment, and to endeavor to secure a permanent endowment. Dr. Whitman wished first to erect more temporary buildings, although the debt of the Laboratory was thereby increased. Out of deference to Dr. Whitman the Board yielded more than once, but last winter they showed a positive determination not to sanction the continuation of the policy.

The second point concerned the financial management. The trustees held that it was their duty to exercise an effective control of the finances, in accordance with their legal obligation under the act of incorporation, and, therefore, that they must regulate the general appropriations, such as those for salaries, for running expenses, etc. Dr. Whitman, on the contrary, apparently considered that the expenditures were to be regulated solely by him, and acted accordingly. He exceeded his appropriations for running expenses and spent money necessary for certain uses for an unauthorized purpose. The trustees adopted the most generous and lenient view possible of these occurrences, for they attributed them to Dr. Whitman's ignorance of the ordinary rules of financial administration, until the violations became so extreme that it was unavoidable to take prompt and efficient steps to protect the Laboratory.

The following instances illustrate the character of Dr. Whitman's financial standards. In his report for 1895, p. 28, he presents figures to show that each time the trustees acceded to his wish for a new building the earnings of the Laboratory increased faster than the expenses. But Dr. Whitman's statement of the expenses for five of the eight years was extremely incorrect,* as shown in the following table:

* It is to be regretted that the errors were not observed in time to withdraw them from publication.

Year.	Dr. Whitman's Figures.	Actual Figures.*
1888	\$1320.	\$2205.
1889	1554.	2377.
1890	2430.	3041.
1891	3498.	3346.
1892	4132.	4049.
1893	4264.	4110.
1894	4882.	6940.
1895	8010.	8474.

He failed also to note that with each new building, since 1891, the confidence in the Laboratory diminished and thereafter the gifts to the institution decreased.

Year.	New Building.	Gifts.
1888	(first)	\$9926
1889	—	5400
1890	one	2984
1891	—	5875
1892	one	5113
1893	one	3613
1894	one	2977
1895	—	2368
1896	one	1122
1897	—	1651†

As an illustration of Dr. Whitman's views as to the finances of the Laboratory, he maintained that the last new building paid for itself because the rooms were occupied, but was unable to recognize that he had used the privilege of inviting guests to the Laboratory so liberally that if these workers, who paid nothing, had been dropped, the extra rooms provided in the new building would have been unnecessary. The charge for an investigator's room is \$100. The number of non-paying guests invited by Dr. Whitman was fourteen in 1896 and eleven in 1897.

Again, last winter the Laboratory was in debt, a debt which the trustees were obliged to meet. The Assistant Director held certain sums which he had collected from sales of supplies. The Treasurer called in these

* Compiled from the Treasurer's Reports. As certain items, such as postage, printing, etc., which represent regular annual expenses are not included, several of these amounts are less than they should be.

† Includes Mr. Nunn's payment of \$398.

sums, but was met by a refusal because the Assistant Director had been told by Dr. Whitman to retain the money, subject to his order.

Other illustrations of the embarrassments caused by Dr. Whitman in the financial management of the Laboratory might be enumerated.

The lack of financial ability, demonstrated by the Director, rendered it in the judgment of the Trustees, imperative to protect the interests of the Laboratory. The Trustees therefore appointed a trained business man as Bursar, who received orders to pay all bills approved by Dr. Whitman, up to the limit of the appropriations. The Bursar proved very efficient and satisfactory, and furnished the trustees with clear and definite summaries of the receipts and expenditures during the summer.

3. The trustees as a body were desirous of making the Laboratory a truly national institution, while Dr. Whitman apparently wished to convert it into an organization under his own exclusive control. The trustees decided to insist upon their authority as the fulfilment of a trust confided to them by the subscribers to the funds of the Laboratory.

At the close of the session of 1896 the trustees were confronted by a deficit of about \$1,500,* according to the written official statement of the Treasurer. This deficit was due to two causes: *first*, Dr. Whitman had greatly exceeded the income at his disposal; *second*, he used nearly \$400 necessary for covering the running expenses, and spent it for an unauthorized purpose, disregarding a vote of the trustees.

He justified this act by stating, afterwards, that Mr. Nunn had promised this sum for that use. To offset this deficiency the trustees had only certain expected fees

*The exact amount could not be given, as certain bills had not been sent in.

for the past season, but these belated fees, amounting last year to several hundred dollars, it has been the custom to reserve to cover the expenses of opening the Laboratory the following season. Under these conditions it was impossible to plan to open the Laboratory until funds were secured to cover the deficit, and Dr. Whitman was so informed. The Laboratory had, in addition, a debt of about \$5,500. After several months the \$398.59 used by Dr. Whitman was restored to the treasury by a payment made for that purpose by Mr. Nunn. The trustees applied all the fees they could collect to cover the deficit and finally raised in Boston \$1,144, and thereupon immediately made public announcement of the opening of the Laboratory.

Dr. Whitman, who was the cause of these difficulties, and therefore of the delay in issuing the announcement for 1897, blamed the trustees not only for their conservatism, but also for that delay and for the appointment of a Bursar, which his deficiencies had rendered indispensable.

A written offer was received in April, 1897, from Mr. L. L. Nunn, of Telluride, Colorado, a brother-in-law of the Director and one of the trustees of the Laboratory since January, 1896. This offer substantially was as follows :

Mr. Nunn offered to pay the deficit in the running expenses at Wood's Holl for the season of 1897, after devoting towards the payment of such expenses all proceeds obtained from the operations at Wood's Holl. These running expenses did not include insurance, interest on the debt, or the expenses of the Treasurer's office. The offer was made upon the condition that Dr. Whitman directed the Laboratory in accordance with his best judgment and that Mr. Allen, 'or some other person acceptable to me' (Mr. Nunn's words), be employed as Assistant Treasurer at Wood's Holl. Mr. Nunn made himself responsible only for expenses

incurred with consent of said Assistant Treasurer or himself.

It is to be noted that Mr. Nunn offered an uncertain amount and made no promise of subsequent assistance, but did state expressly to the trustees, at a meeting, that no large gift could be expected from him. As the acceptance of this offer was conditional on the discharge of the Bursar already engaged by the trustees, and as the trustees did not consider it wise to relinquish all responsibility, even for a limited time, to one of their number, Mr. Nunn's proposition was declined by a recorded vote of nine to one, and the decision was communicated to him by the Treasurer in the following terms :

April 15th, 1897.

L. L. NUNN, Esq.,

Dear Sir :

I have your letter of April 9th from Provo, Utah, enclosing draft of your offer to the Trustees of the Marine Biological Laboratory.

The Trustees, after giving your generous offer careful consideration since your visit to Boston, and after a meeting at which the subject was fully discussed, were with one exception of the opinion that it would not be compatible with their duties as Trustees of the Laboratory, to resign into the hands of Dr. Whitman the entire direction of its policy, even though guaranteed by you against any financial loss during the coming season.

Your first letter and draft were never received by me ; I presume they miscarried in the mail, and your second letter did not arrive until after the meeting, but I do not find anything in it which materially differed from the proposition as originally made to the Trustees by word of mouth. I shall transmit your letter and offer to the Secretary, in order that they may be submitted to the Trustees at their next meeting, but I think we may regard the matter as definitely settled without awaiting further action.

Personally, I believe that the decision of the Trustees was a necessary one ; at the same time, I confess to great reluctance in foregoing on behalf of the Laboratory your generous assistance, and we must certainly all be very grateful to you for the interest you have taken in our project.

Yours truly,

LAURENCE MINOT.

4. The customary summer meeting of the

board of trustees was held at Wood's Holl on August 6, 1897. At this meeting only a small attendance is expected, as it is known that many members are usually absent on expeditions or vacations, and, accordingly, until this year only routine business had been transacted at this meeting. Before this meeting began, Dr. Whitman stated, deliberately, to the Acting President in response to a question, that there was no important new business to be brought forward. After the hour of the meeting the four members of the board who had come from Boston to attend were kept waiting half an hour for the arrival of the other members who were then at Wood's Holl, although it was known that most of the Boston trustees must return by the last train in two hours. On the motion of Dr. E. G. Gardiner some 150 new members of the corporation were elected, most of them students at the Laboratory. Without this election it is doubtful if the subsequent plans could have been carried through. After all the business known to the President and Secretary had been transacted, Dr. Whitman introduced an extended discussion on some matters of the past (about which no action was possible). Almost immediately thereafter it became necessary for three members to leave to take the last train to Boston, and a protest against continuing the meeting was made but was overridden. The meeting was continued by Dr. Whitman, Dr. E. G. Gardiner, Professor J. P. McMurrich, Professor S. F. Clarke and the Secretary, who remained. The proposition to hold the annual meeting at Wood's Holl, a piece of important new business, for which there had previously been ample opportunity was then brought forward, and the following votes were passed, the Secretary voting in the negative in each case. The Secretary also made strong protests against passing so revolu-

tionary measures after the Acting President and two trustees had left the meeting.

Voted on the motion of Dr. E. G. Gardiner: That the clerk be directed to call a special meeting of the corporation to consider the advisability of changing the by-laws, the meeting to be held at the Parker House, Boston, on August 16th.

Voted: That the temporary chairman (Professor McMurrich) appoint a committee of three to formulate the changes in the by-laws.

The committee was constituted with Dr. Gardiner, chairman; Dr. Whitman and Professor Clarke.

The purpose of the proposed changes was to have the annual meetings of the corporation held at Wood's Holl, to change the board of trustees from a body practically self-perpetuating to an elective body, and to place the control of the Laboratory in new hands.

We consider the action taken entirely unjustifiable, owing to the methods employed. There are also special reasons which made it unsuitable for Dr. Whitman and for Dr. Gardiner and Professor McMurrich to pursue the course taken.

In his Report for 1895, p. 47, Dr. Whitman says: "It still remains possible for a minority of four to hold meetings at convenience in Boston and regulate the affairs of the Laboratory, and that, too, in the absence of every one familiar with the needs. It makes no difference whether this has or has not been done; the possibility of its being done is what jeopardizes vital interests of the Laboratory."

We call attention to the fact that Dr. Whitman, aided by Messrs. Gardiner, McMurrich and Clarke, is the first and only person who has profited by the possibility he so emphatically condemned, and that, by utilizing it, he and his three supporters succeeded in setting aside the expressed wishes of the board of trustees, and in changing

the national character of the Laboratory.

In August 1895, the trustees appointed a committee 'to take into consideration a reorganization of the governing body.' In 1896 Dr. Gardiner was made chairman of this committee, of which Professor McMurrich was also a member. A resolve proposing certain changes in the mode of government of the Laboratory, introduced by one of the trustees, was referred to the committee.

We regret that the committee, in spite of many repeated requests to its chairman, made no report, and that Dr. Gardiner and Professor McMurrich, instead of acting in consultation with their fellow trustees, adopted a plan to reorganize the government of the Laboratory by other means.

5. The special meeting was duly held at the Parker House, Boston, on August 16th. A large attendance from Wood's Holl was secured, it is said, by hiring a special car and offering to pay the fares of the members of the Corporation, many of whom had been elected only a few days before. It was proposed by some of the Boston trustees to ask for a hearing before this meeting, but the gathering seemed to them so evidently packed that they considered any attempt to obtain a hearing useless. The proposed changes in the by-laws were carried through. The most important one of these is that which fixes the annual meeting for the summer at Wood's Holl. This change seems well calculated to enable the Director to maintain practically control over the Corporation. Other changes made are likely also to favor this result.

The newly appointed annual meeting of the Corporation was held at Wood's Holl on August 24th. A new board of trustees was elected and five of the Boston trustees were dropped. The Boston trustees could make no defense, because they had never

heard any accusations and had no information until the meeting of their projected exclusion. Moreover, nearly all the undersigned were necessarily absent from that meeting.

Although without the labors of the five trustees who were dropped from the board the Laboratory might never have existed, and although Dr. Whitman was under many obligations to them, they were ejected from the board by means which can only be considered underhand and dishonorable. We believe that such a policy must injure the Laboratory seriously and we are unable to give it support or approval.

The main points of this statement are as follows :

1. The recognition of the scientific ability of the Director, his devotion and services to the Laboratory.
2. The utter lack of sound financial standards shown by the Director.
3. The dishonorableness of the methods employed to reorganize the government of the Laboratory.
4. The ignorance of the facts on the part of the members of the Corporation present at the meetings of August 16th and 24th, which helped to make this reorganization possible.

SAMUEL H. SCUDDER,
President, 1891-96 ;

WILLIAM G. FARLOW,
Acting President, 1896-97 ;

ANNA P. WILLIAMS,
Secretary, 1888-97 ;

LAURENCE MINOT,
Treasurer, 1894-97 ;

CHARLES S. MINOT,
Trustee, 1888-97 ;

GEORGINA W. SMITH,
Trustee, 1891-97 ;

SIDNEY I. SMITH,
Trustee, 1891-97.